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Canada

Speaking Notes for
Rob Moore
M.P. for Fundy Royal
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
for the
National Victims of Crime Awareness Week Symposium

Thank you for that kind introduction. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to join all of you today at this symposium to mark the beginning of National Victims of Crime Awareness Week.

The Honourable Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, is very sorry that he could not join us today but he would like to extend his best wishes for a successful National Victims of Crime Awareness Week.

This year's events revolve around the theme "Finding the Way Together." And I believe it's a very appropriate theme. It acknowledges that it takes the efforts of many people from all walks of life and throughout our communities to address the issues of victims.

Most Canadians recognize crime's negative effects on society. Until recently, though, little attention had been paid to what crime does to victims. Victims and victims' families are often devastated by the criminal acts they have experienced.

Our Government believes that Canada's justice system can do more to better meet the needs of victims. These needs are real, and we are responding to them.

We have listened to victims, and we continue to learn more about how crime has had a devastating effect on them.

Our Government has committed $52 million over four years to increase the availability of services for victims of crime. That money is expanding the resources available to victims who choose to attend parole hearings, who experience crime while abroad, and who live in northern communities.

We also fulfilled our long-standing commitment to create a Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. The Ombudsman promotes the concerns of victims, and ensures that victims can gain access to federal services and programs.

In fact, one year ago this week, the Minister of Justice had the pleasure of introducing Canada's first Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, Steve Sullivan. I am very pleased that he has joined us today to launch this year's events.

Our Government is committed to working with partners at all levels to respond to the needs of victims of crime.

But it is also important to prevent other people from becoming victims. And that is why our Government is also committed to tackling crime.

After two long years of delay and obstruction by the Liberals in the House of Commons and Senate, our *Tackling Violent Crime Act* finally became law. This means that:

- as of May 1st, 2008, our children will be better protected from sexual predators and those of commit a serious crime with a gun will face tougher sentences and bail conditions; and
- as of July 2nd, Canadian society will be better protected from dangerous offenders, and alcohol and drug impaired drivers will face tougher consequences.

Beyond our *Tackling Violent Crime Act*, we have also passed legislation to increase penalties for those convicted of street racing and to end house arrest for serious personal injury and violent offences.

We have also introduced legislation to strengthen the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and toprotect Canadians against identity theft. In addition we introduced our National Anti-Drug Strategy, including legislation that would provide mandatory jail time for serious drug crimes, and invested in crime prevention community projects across Canada that target youth.

And later this afternoon, our Government will be tabling legislation that proposes new penalties that target property theft, particularly auto theft, by organized crime operations. It will give law enforcement authorities and prosecutors the tools they need to fight this serious crime.

Our Government is committed to protecting Canada's citizens. But we cannot do it alone. Clearly, all of us must work together to help victims and to prevent crime.

During this week, people in communities across Canada will be getting out the message about what crime does to victims, and what all of us can do to help victims more effectively.

This symposium features expert speakers from many areas – from policy to corrections to the academic world in hopes of bringing together Canadians to help the cause of victims.

We will also hear from Sheldon Kennedy, who will share his own experiences as a victim, and more importantly, as a survivor and advocate who now dedicates his time and energy to raising awareness of abuse in sports. As Sheldon will attest, the effects of crime reach far into the lives of victims.

Today, on behalf of all Canadians, I would like to thank the men and women who work with victims of crime – this week, and throughout the year – and especially the organizers of this symposium. Your efforts will truly help all of us find the way together.

Thank you. Now Steve Sullivan will say a few words...

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